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If - God Permit

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“IF GOD PERMIT”

A Word to Detained Volunteers

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A STUDENT volunteer who finds his way seemingly blocked for leaving the home land and getting to the foreign mission field, should give renewed and prayerful study to the “if God permit” of our Volunteer Declaration. Difficulties in the way are no proof in themselves that God is leading in another direction. God permitted Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, but what obstacles did he not have to face! God permitted Deborah to destroy the hosts of Sisera, but so hazardous was the undertaking that only a few were willing to risk their lives with her. God permitted our Lord to redeem a lost world, but the death on the cross and the contradiction of sinners were

not spared Him. And from Paul, who had to make tents that he might carry out his commission to the Gentiles, down through all the martyrs and heroes to our own day, difficulties have not been lacking to those whom God has permitted to do large things for Him.

We are to examine very closely whether we have not put "if man permit," or "if circumstances seem to permit," or "if friends approve," in the place of "if God permit." In the Declaration we have acknowledged no interference but God's interference. Think how clearly God sees the need, think how boundless is His love for the lost, think how infinite His power to remove our obstacles, and then determine whether He has *refused to permit* us to go to those to whom no one else is going. Does my faltering faith seek permission from some one else than God? What an awful awakening it will be, if later in life, or else in the clear light of that "great and terrible day of the Lord," we find out that we have allowed some difficulty, which would have been but a feather before the torrent of His irresistible power, to block our way!

In considering the phrase "if God permit," let us not fail to remember that "with God all things are possible." If God wishes us to go to work among His needy ones, He can put it

into the hearts of some one of His people to support us. If not that, all the ravens are not dead yet.

It is doubtful whether any greater blessing has come to the Student Volunteer Movement than the difficulties which now face its members in getting to the field. Difficulties are our discipline. They throw us back on God, and this strengthens faith. The person who has not had the experience of being shut up with God as the only resource, and then had God wonderfully deliver him, has missed an experience without which he is unfit for the highest work on the foreign field. Difficulties reveal to us the depths of our love for the heathen, the genuineness of our desire to go, and the purity of our motives. They are heart searchers. Without them many a person altogether unfit would have drifted to the foreign field, only to find his way back to America after several years of fruitless effort.

Let every volunteer before whom the way seems blocked take time for uncompromising heart searching and prayer. The following are suggested as some of the questions to be used:—

(1) Am I really *pained* that I seemingly cannot go? or do I rather rejoice that I have shown myself willing? and do I congratulate

myself that I have discharged my obligation and am still at home?

(2) Have I mistaken man's voice for God's voice in this matter of remaining at home? Have I ever pleaded with God through the night watches to let me go?

(3) Since the way seems blocked, has my love for the heathen waned? Am I willing with all my heart to write out and sign this: "If God does not permit me to go as a foreign missionary, I will, God helping me, make just as many sacrifices for the heathen at home as if I had gone. I will never indulge in luxuries. Every single cent throughout my whole life shall be spent in realizing the need of the world for the gospel. My time, my effort, and my intellect I will strive to use with my eyes upon a ruined world"?

(4) Am I praying for the heathen? Have I, with Isaiah, said, "I will take no rest until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth"?

(5) Would I be unable to undertake this enterprise if it meant great material advantage to me? Suppose, for example, that I were elected President of the Congo Free State, with a princely salary and with opportunities for taking advantage of its development; suppose that I were urged to accept by all the Powers of Europe, by my own Government,

and by all my friends, and still were surrounded by just the same difficulties as now face me, could I see my way to accept? Have I made as great effort to go to the heathen as a missionary as I should under some such circumstances as the above?

Fellow volunteers, God may keep some of us at home, but let us be sure that *He* keeps us and not man. We have not yet striven unto death. The world was never in such need of heroes and martyrs as to-day. The wonderful blessings showered upon our fellow volunteers upon the field show that God's time in the foreign field has come. In the beginning of the movement the Church needed men who were willing to go; now she needs men unwilling to stay. Let us plead so earnestly with the Church that it cannot keep us. We need to take new courage and *fight our way through*, if need be. The world *must* be evangelized, and that right speedily. God permits; God commands. "Who art thou, O great mountain?"

